

Theological Anti-Judaism in Gregory the Great*

Rodrigo Laham Cohen**

Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA)

Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET)

ANTIJUDAÍSMO TEOLÓGICO EN GREGORIO MAGNO.— El uso de tópicos antijudíos por parte de los hombres de Iglesia del primer milenio ha suscitado debates en torno a las razones que motivaron tal práctica discursiva. Una línea de investigación enfatizó la existencia de un conflicto real entre judíos y cristianos, hecho que habría derivado en la constitución de la literatura *Adversus Iudaeos*. En contraste, otra posición hizo hincapié en aspectos discursivos, resaltando la necesidad cristiana de autodefinición en oposición a la matriz judía y confinando el antijudaísmo a cuestiones estrictamente textuales e identitarias distantes del contexto social inmediato. La figura de Gregorio Magno, gracias a la gran variabilidad textual que presenta su obra, otorga una herramienta fundamental a la hora de comprender las dinámicas del antijudaísmo cristiano. En este artículo se exploran todos los escritos gregorianos, mediante un estudio cualitativo y cuantitativo, poniéndose de relieve en qué tipo de textos aparecen los *topoi adversus Iudaeos* y concluyendo que, al menos para el Papa entre el 590 y el 604, el antijudaísmo fue una cuestión estrictamente simbólica.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Judaísmo; cristianismo; Gregorio Magno; literatura *Adversus Iudaeos*.

The Christian use of anti-Jewish topics during the first millennium has generated discussions concerning the reasons for that discursive practice. Some researchers have considered a genuine conflict between Jews and Christians as the root of the *Adversus Iudaeos* literature. In contrast, another position emphasized discursive aspects, highlighting the Christian need for defining its identity in opposition to the Jewish past. From that point of view anti-Judaism thus stands as a textual question largely disconnected from the social context. The work of Gregory the Great, due to its noticeable textual variability, becomes a fundamental tool to understand the dynamics of anti-Judaism. In this article we explore all the Gregorian texts in a qualitative and quantitative analysis, underlining the kind of

* This article is a condensation of my Ph.D. Thesis, *Judíos hermenéuticos y judíos históricos en tiempos de Gregorio Magno* defended in 2013 at the University of Buenos Aires. My research was supported by a grant from the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), the University of Buenos Aires, the *Coimbra Group*, and the *Università degli studi di Padova*.

** r_lahamcohen@hotmail.com

texts in which the *topoi Adversus Iudaeos* appear and concluding that, at least for the Pope between 590 and 604, anti-Judaism was a strictly symbolic question.

KEYWORDS: Judaism; Christianity; Gregory the Great; *Adversus Iudaeos* Literature.

INTRODUCTION

The reasons why the majority of church fathers felt called upon to assail Jews in their discourse during the first millennium AD has been the subject of much debate. Indeed, the *Adversus Iudaeos* literature has provoked still-unresolved controversy among different historiographical schools over the years.

More than 60 years ago Marcel Simon affirmed that anti-Jewish *topoi* were the outcome of competition between Christians and Jews.¹ In his opposition to the hypothesis of Adolf von Harnack,² the French scholar focused on the struggle between Jewish and Christian orthodoxies to retain and increase their congregations.³ On the basis of solid documentary evidence, Simon countered Harnack's portrayal of a languid, inward-looking Judaism following the fall of the Second Temple, with the description of an active minority engaged in a successful proselytizing mission, at least until the first third of the 5th century.⁴ In the 1960s, Bernhard Blu-

¹ M. SIMON, *Verus Israël. Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l'Empire Romain (135-425)* (Paris 1948). A good assessment of the work half a century later can be found in F. PARENTE, "Verus Israel di Marcel Simon a cinquant'anni dalla pubblicazione" in *Verus Israel*, eds. C. GIANOTTO and G. FILORAMO (Brescia 2001) pp. 19-46.

² Possibly the best formulation was in "Die Altercatio Simonis Iudaei et Theophili Christiani, nebst Untersuchungen über die antijüdische Polemik in der alten Kirche," in *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, I, III, eds. A. HARNACK and O. GEBHARDT (Leipzig 1883) pp. 1-136.

³ Harnack's position had already been tangentially responded to in the works of Jean Juster, James Parkes, and Arthur Williams. J. JUSTER, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain. Leur condition juridique, économique et sociale* (Paris 1914); J. PARKES, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (London 1934); A. LUCKYN WILLIAMS, *Adversus Iudaeos: A Bird's-eye View of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance* (Cambridge 1935).

⁴ The question of proselytism, vital to Simon's conception, has undoubtedly been one of the most controversial aspects of his hypothesis. Following a series of studies published in the '90s, the current consensus has tended to discard the notion of an aggressive mission on the part of the Jews. However, the matter is far from settled, and scholars remain who affirm the likelihood of Jewish proselytism in the early centuries of the first

menkranz expressed a similar position within an extended period of time (430-1096 AD), which generated doubts in Simon himself.⁵ Although the notion of an aggressive Judaism has been discarded in recent decades, Simon's and Blumenkranz's imprint has not been lost: even without proselytism, their theory postulated a religion that, at least passively, succeeded in attracting a significant group of Christians. This, they said, provoked heated criticism from church fathers that found its way into the *adversus Iudaeos* literature.

Opposition to this perspective was mounted by a group of historians who emphasized the symbolic aspects of Christian anti-Judaism. Rosemary Radford Ruether, the most cogent proponent of this position, declared that anti-Jewish rhetoric originated in the endogenous requirements of Christian exegesis.⁶ According to the theologian, the basis of early Christian dis-

millennium AD. Against Simon's position: S. McKnight, *A Light among the Gentiles. Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period* (Minneapolis 1991); E. Will and C. Orrieux, *Proselitisme juif. Histoire d'une erreur?* (Paris 1992); S. Cohen, "Was Judaism in Antiquity a Missionary Religion?," in *Jewish Assimilation, Acculturation and Accommodation: Past Traditions, Current Issues and Future Prospects*, ed. M. Mor (Lanham 1992); M. Goodman, *Mission and Conversion. Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1994); J. P. Ware, *The Mission of the Church in Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Context of Ancient Judaism* (Leiden 2005). In favor of the idea of proselytism during the period: L. H. Feldman, *Jews and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton 1993); J. Carleton Paget, "Jewish Proselytism at the Time of Christian Origins: Chimera or Reality?," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 62 (1996) pp. 65-103; P. Borgen, "Proselytes, Conquest, and Missio," in *Recruitment, Conquest, and Conflict: Strategies on Judaism, Early Christianity and the Greco-Roman World*, eds. P. Borgen, V. Robbins and D. Gowler (Atlanta 1998) pp. 57-77. See also J. Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: the Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission* (Tübingen 2003).

⁵ B. Blumenkranz, *Juifs et Chrétiens dans le monde occidental 430-1096* (Paris 1960). Simon unmistakably expressed his doubts about the survival of Jewish proselytism in the Middle Ages in the *Post-scriptum* (p. 486) that appeared in the 1964 edition of his *Versus Israël* cited above.

⁶ Her most representative work is undoubtedly *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York 1974). As noted above, Ruether came close to certain of Harnack's postulates. This position had already been suggested in G. B. Ladner, "Aspects of Patristic Anti-Judaism," *Viator* 2 (1971) pp. 355-363 and in G. Langmuir, "Anti-Judaism as the Necessary Preparation for Anti-Semitism," *Viator* 2 (1971) pp. 383-389. See also J. Isaac, *Jésus et Israël* (Paris 1948) and *L'Enseignement du mépris : vérité historique et mythes théologiques* (Paris 1962). See also D. Efrayimson, "The Patristic Connection," in *Antisemitism*

course rested, in part, on anti-Judaism. In order to justify the divine plan, church fathers were obliged to repudiate the people that had rejected Christ, despite the prognostication of their own prophets. Although sharing some of Harnack's positions, Ruether attributes a different fundamental cause to this patristic position. Whether Judaism was active or not in the early centuries of the millennium was irrelevant to the rise of anti-Judaism; it was, instead, a response to the internal dynamics of the Christian message and its need to define itself. Accordingly, anti-Judaism could exist without Jews.

This position was carried even further by Miriam Taylor who, in the 1990s, stated that in no case – at least up to the 4th century – was *adversus Iudaeos* literature the product of a conflict.⁷ Indeed, the historian severely criticized Simon's proposal.⁸ Calling it "conflict theory," she attributed it to an overreaction to faulty contextualizing inherited from the 19th century.

More than a decade ago, Guy Stroumsa asserted that the problem with both models was that they were static.⁹ His response was to construct a schema containing a diachronic variable in order to account for the different phases of Christian anti-Judaism that appeared in the first half of the first millennium. He establishes the 4th century and the loss of visibility of paganism as inflexion points marking the period between anti-Judaism for theological reasons and anti-Judaism as a response to a concrete situation. For my part, despite the validity of Stroumsa's attempt to incorporate dynamics of change

and the Foundations of Christianity, ed. A. DAVIES (New York 1979) pp. 98-117; L. GASTON, "Retrospect," in *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity. Volume 2: Separation and Polemic*, ed. S. G. WILSON (Ontario, 1986) pp. 163-174; S. G. WILSON "Marcion and the Jews," in *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity. Volume 2*, pp. 45-58; L. JOHNSON, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989) pp. 419-441; R. S. MACLENNAN, *Early Christian Texts on Jews and Judaism* (Atlanta 1990).

⁷ M. S. TAYLOR, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity. A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus* (Leiden–New York–Cologne 1995).

⁸ David Efroymson praised the book, although in his view, Marcel Simon's positions remained valid, thus subtly criticizing the exclusiveness the theological variant had acquired in Taylor's work. He also questioned the use of "broadly dismissive" language when referring to Simon and other researchers. D. EFROYMSON, "Review of M. Taylor, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity: A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus*» *JQR* 87 (1997) pp. 380-382.

⁹ G. G. STROUMSA, "From Anti-Judaism to Antisemitism in Early Christianity?," in *Contra Iudaeos. Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews*, eds. O. LIMOR and G. STROUMSA (Tübingen 1996) pp. 1-26.

into his model, I find the author's paradigm, in turn, too rigid. In my view, rather than setting up inflexion points to frame the dynamics accounting for the *adversus Iudaeos* literature, each individual church father should be analyzed independently in order to forge an accurate image of his life and times. As I see it, Simon's and Ruether's models are not mutually exclusive; they can be applied interchangeably according to the requirements of a particular text, even within the same historical period.¹⁰

In this regard, the works of Gregory the Great, the *Consul Dei*,¹¹ comprise a veritable laboratory for experimenting with the different models in order to evaluate hypotheses for the existence of anti-Jewish *topoi*. Gregory has bequeathed an extensive *corpus* consisting of texts of diverse genres and structures intended for different audiences. As has been noted by a number of authors,¹² there is an apparent contradiction be-

¹⁰ The debate about the roots of Anti-Judaism has continued to this day. More works on the topic: P. FREDRIKSEN and O. IRSHAI, "Christian anti-Judaism: Polemics and Policies," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism. Volume 4: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, ed. S. T. KATZ (Cambridge 2006) pp. 977-1034; S. MORLET, O. MUNNICH and B. POUDERON (eds.), *Les dialogues 'adversus Iudaeos'. Permanences et mutations d'une tradition polémique. Actes du colloque international organisé les 7 et 8 décembre 2011 à l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne* (Turnhout 2013); P. FREDRIKSEN, "Roman Christianity and the Post-Roman West: The Social Correlates of the *Contra Iudaeos* Tradition," in *Jews, Christians, and the Roman Empire. The Poetics of Power in Late Antiquity*, eds. N. DOHRMANN and A. YOSHIKO REED (Philadelphia 2013) pp. 249-266. In this latter paper Fredriksen uses the following concepts: "Hermeneutical Jew," "Rhetorical Jew" and "Real Jew" (p. 249).

¹¹ This was the name given Gregory the Great by the anonymous author of his epitaph. As Claude Dagens has perceptively affirmed, conjugating his notable political weight with his dedication to religion summarizes the life of Gregory. C. DAGENS, "Saint Grégoire le Grand, Consul Dei," in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo. XIX incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana in collaborazione con l'École Française de Rome. Roma, 9-12 maggio, 1990* (Roma 1991) pp. 33-45. For the epitaph, see G. DE ROSSI (ed.), *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae* 2:1 (Roma 1888) p. 52.

¹² This was explicitly observed by James Parkes in the 1930s. Victor Tiollier and Sofia Boesch Gajano also shed light on this aspect. Jeremy Cohen was undoubtedly the one who placed the greatest emphasis on the difference between the position regarding Jews in the epistles and that observed in the rest of his treatises. In this regard he divided the chapter dedicated to Gregory in sections titled *Sicut Iudaeis* and *Adversus Iudaeos*. I want to categorically state that the work of Cohen has been fundamental to my own research, as has that of Robert Markus and Sofia Boesch Gajano. PARKES, *The Conflict*, pp. 210-221; V. TIOLLIER, *Saint Grégoire le Grand et les Juifs. Esquisse doctrinale et historique* (Brignais 1913); S. BOESCH GAJANO, "Per una storia degli ebrei in Occidente tra Antichità e Medioevo.

tween the Gregory who wrote the epistles and the Gregory who engaged in exegesis. As I will attempt to demonstrate in the course of this abbreviated presentation, it is precisely this dissonance that provides a key for detecting some of the reasons behind anti-Jewish literature.

GREGORY AND THE JEWS OF HIS TIME

The *Registrum epistularum* constitutes – with the exception of the *Dialogi*, which will be discussed below – the only Gregorian work where *real Jews* are to be found.¹³ Only biblical Jews and generic references are present in the other treatises and homilies; in the vast majority of cases, abstractions such as Synagogue, Israel, Jewish people, among others, are what we encounter.

The *historical Jews* in the epistolary have been frequently studied, since the *Registrum* is a valuable – in fact, the almost exclusive – source of information on the life and times of Italian Jews of the period.¹⁴ Thus I will mention them briefly, presenting the principal events

La testimonianza di Gregorio Magno,” *Quaderni Medievali* 8 (1979) pp. 21-23; R. MARKUS, “The Jew as a Hermeneutical Device: The Inner Life of a Gregorian Topos,” in *Gregory the Great. A Symposium*, ed. J. CAVADINI (Notre Dame 1996) pp. 1-15; R. MARKUS, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge 1997); J. COHEN, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley 1999) pp. 73-94.

¹³ *Real Jews* I take to mean specific subjects who, above and beyond the mythical deeds in the narrative – as in the case of the *Dialogi* – are presented by the writer as persons existing in his own time. The best edition of the *Registrum* is still D. NORBERG (ed.), *Gregorius Magnus. Registrum Epistularum* (CCSL 140 and 140A [Turnhout 1982]).

¹⁴ H. GRAETZ, *Geschichte der Juden...* 5: *vom Abschluß des Talmud (500) bis zum Aufblühen der jüdisch-Spanischen Cultur (1027)* (2^a ed., Leipzig 1871) pp. 40-44; F. GÖRRES, “Papst Gregor I der Große und das Judentum,” *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 50 (1908) pp. 489-505; TIOILLIER, *Saint Grégoire le Grand*; S. KATZ, “Pope Gregory the Great and the Jews,” *JQR* 24 (1933) pp. 113-136; PARKES, *The Conflict*, pp. 210-221; B. BLUMENKRANZ, *Les auteurs chrétiens du Moyen Age sur les juifs et le judaïsme* (Paris 1963) pp. 73-86; B. BACHRACH, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy in Western Europe* (Minneapolis 1977) pp. 35-39; BOESCH GAJANO, “Per una storia,” E. BÄMMEL, “Gregor der Grosse und die Juden,” in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo*, pp. 283-291; E. BALTRUSCH, “Gregor der Große und sein Verhältnis zum Römischen Recht am Beispiel seiner Politik gegenüber den Juden,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 259:1 (1994) pp. 39-58; MARKUS, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 76-80; COHEN, *Living Letters*, pp. 73-94; D. O. MAKUJA, “Gregory the Great, Roman Law and the Jews: Seeking ‘true’ Conversions,” *Sacris Erudiri* 48 (2009) pp. 35-76. The works dedicated exclusively to Jews in the Gregorian exegesis will be referenced below.

involving Jews in the epistolary and underscoring the factors governing Gregory the Great's attitude toward them.

During the 14 years covered in the epistolary (590-604), Jews suffered aggressions in four Italian cities. On two occasions they were expelled from their successive houses of worship in Terracina;¹⁵ their synagogues in Palermo were occupied and then consecrated by the local bishop;¹⁶ a group led by a new convert occupied the synagogue in Cagliari,¹⁷ and the bishop of Naples disturbed Jewish celebrations in the city.¹⁸ Forced conversions, denounced by Gregory, are also recorded in Gaul.¹⁹

However, the panorama is not as bleak as might appear at first glance. The *Registrum* documents Jewish settlements in a significant number of cities,²⁰ where Jews exercise diverse economic activities, occupying different positions in the social structure.²¹ Likewise, different epistles offer a glimpse of good relations between Jews and Christians, not only among

¹⁵ Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, I, 34; II, 45.

¹⁶ Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, VIII, 25; IX, 38.

¹⁷ Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, IX, 196.

¹⁸ Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, XIII, 13.

¹⁹ Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, I, 45.

²⁰ Thanks to the *Registrum*, we know that, on the Italian peninsula, there were Jews living in Agrigento (*ep.* VIII, 23), Cagliari (*ep.* IV, 9; IX, 196), Luni (*ep.* IV, 21), Messina (*ep.* VII, 41), Naples (*ep.* VI, 29; IX, 105), Palermo (*ep.* VIII, 25; IX, 38; IX, 40), Rome (*ep.* I, 45; VIII, 25), Terracina (*ep.* I, 34; II 45), and Venafrò (*ep.* I, 66). Gregory refers on occasion (*ep.* I, 42; I, 69; II, 50; V, 7), to Sicily in general, which makes it impossible to know what other cities on the island had Jewish inhabitants.

²¹ In the epistolary, landowners, peasants, and merchants professing the Jewish religion are found. There may also be a reference to a sailor (*ep.* IX, 40). For his part, BLUMENKRANZ (*Les auteurs chrétiens*, p. 74) thinks he has detected a goldsmith (*ep.* I, 66), who was in fact a merchant. The economic activities in general of the Jews figuring in the *Registrum* were touched upon tangentially by BOESCH GAJANO, "Per una storia." More recently: R. LAHAM COHEN, "Los judíos en el *Registrum epistularum* de Gregorio Magno. El valor del rol social en la definición del otro," in *Pasado, presente y porvenir de las humanidades y las artes III*, ed. D. ARAUZ MERCADO (Zacatecas 2011) pp. 267-292; M. TOCH, *The Economic History of European Jews. Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages* (Leiden-Boston 2013) pp. 46-64.

the general population,²² but also with certain local authorities, both lay²³ and ecclesiastical.²⁴ The persistence of Jewish settlements is also confirmed by epigraphical²⁵ and archeological²⁶ evidence.

²² Still within the epistolary, economic links between Jews and Christians are recorded (*ep.* I, 42 and IX, 40), as well as the marriage of a Christian man to a woman who had formerly been Jewish (*ep.* I, 69). The evidence is in line with the majority of canons and norms of the period regarding interaction that prohibited meals in common and mixed marriages. See W. PAKTER, *Medieval Canon Law and the Jews* (Ebelsbach 1988) pp. 248-321.

²³ Gregory said in the epistle to the praetor of Sicily that his predecessor in the office had been bribed by Nasas, a Jew who had constructed an altar in honor of Elijah (*ep.* III, 37). Furthermore, Gregory states that *Iudices reipublicae* had been the ones who authorized the purchase of pagan slaves in Gaul (*ep.* IX, 105).

²⁴ Clerics from Venafrò had sold sacred objects from the church to a Jew (*ep.* I, 66). Against imperial regulations and Gregorian orders, clergymen from Cagliari returned to their legal Jewish owners Christian slaves that had taken refuge in churches (*ep.* IV, 9). And finally, Theodore (a Jew or new convert, the source is unclear) had the support of the Churchmen in Messina in his conflict against the Christian Paula (*ep.* VII, 41).

²⁵ For the time period covering the 6th and 7th centuries, a considerable number of Jewish inscriptions have been found, primarily in the southern part of the Italian peninsula, especially in Venosa and Taranto. *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe*, edited by David Noy, is still the definitive source. D. NOY, *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe. V. I: Italy (excluding the city of Rome), Spain and Gaul* (Cambridge 1993). Although dating from before the 5th century, a far greater number have been found in Rome. D. NOY, *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe. V. II: Rome* (Cambridge 1995). Epigraphic research exceeds the boundaries of this paper. For further information, see C. COLAFEMMINA, "Insediamenti e condizione degli ebrei nell'Italia meridionale e insulare," in *Gli ebrei nell'alto medioevo. Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo*, XXVI (Spoleto, 1980) pp. 197-227; D. NOY, "Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe. Language and Community," in *Atti dell'XI Congresso Internazionale di Epigrafia Greca e Latina* (Roma 1999) pp. 603-612; M. LEIWO, "From contact to Mixture: Bilingual Inscriptions from Italy," in *Bilingualism in Ancient Society. Language Contact and Written World*, eds. J. ADAMS, M. JANSÉ and S. SWAIN (Oxford 2002) pp. 168-194; C. COLAFEMMINA, "Le catacombe ebraiche nell'Italia meridionale e nell'area sícula: Venosa, Siracusa, Noto, Lipari e Malta," in *I beni culturali ebraici in Italia: situazione attuale, problemi, prospettive e progetti per il futuro*, ed. M. PERANI (Ravenna 2003) pp. 119-146; A. E. FELLE, "Judaism and Christianity in the Light of Epigraphic Evidence (3rd-7th cent. C.E.)," *Henoch* 29:2 (2007) pp. 354-377. Specifically about Gregory the Great and the Jewish Epigraphy: R. LAHAM COHEN, "Los judíos en el Registrum epistularum de Gregorio Magno y la epigrafía judía de los siglos VI y VII," *Henoch* 35:2 (2013) pp. 214-246.

²⁶ The synagogue at Ostia stopped functioning around the 4th century, but the one in Bova Marina, 50 km. from Reggio di Calabria, remained in use until the end of the

The picture, accordingly, becomes more complex. Conflict unquestionably existed, but Jews found tools for negotiating and strategies for offering resistance. Neither is there evidence suggesting a high level of popular violence; in most recorded cases, the perpetrator was a member of the clergy, even though with the support of part of the population. Subject to peaks of tension, the life of the Jews inhabiting the Italian Peninsula was a long way from the lamentable spectacle portrayed in an important sector of Jewish historiography.²⁷

Gregory's attitude was evidently balanced, and his aim, to avoid conflict. In the cases of usurpation of synagogues and interference in celebrations that figure in the epistles, he sought moderation and adhered to Roman normative precedent. This led him to demand the return of the synagogues, and when this was not possible because they had been consecrated, he established, always in accord with the *Codex Theodosianus*, economic recompense and the assigning of land for the construction of a new synagogue. He also repudiated forced conversion and defended individual Jews suffering injustice at the hands of Christians.²⁸

6th century. For information on this synagogue in general, see L. COSTAMAGNA, "La sinagoga di Bova Marina nel quadro degli insediamenti tardoantichi della costa Ionica meridionale della Calabria," *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome* 103 (1991) pp. 611-631; E. TROMBA, *La sinagoga dei giudei in epoca romana: presenza ebraica a Reggio Calabria e provincia* (Reggio Calabria 2001); L. COSTAMAGNA, "La sinagoga di Bova Marina," in *I beni culturali*, pp. 93-118. See also L. I. LEVINE, *The Ancient Synagogue. The First Thousand Years* (2^a ed., New Haven 2005) pp. 279. On the importance of its discovery for understanding Judaism in Gregorian times, see R. LAHAM COHEN, "Pervivencias judías en la Península Itálica. La sinagoga de Bova Marina en el ocase de la Antigüedad Tardía," *Clarusculo* 9 (2010) pp. 171-191.

²⁷ Criticism of the lachrymose historiography undoubtedly began with Salo Wittmayer Baron. However, in David Myers' view, the University of Columbia professor focused on the Middle Ages, exiling the tears to the Modern Age. For my part, I see the lachrymose conception as an obstacle regardless of period. Nor should the terms be inverted in order to construct an "optimistic" history of the Jews, leaving aside conflictive situations. S. W. BARON, "Ghetto and Emancipation: Shall We Revise the Traditional View?," *Menorah* 14 (1928) pp. 515-526; D. N. MYERS and W. V. ROWE (eds.), *From Ghetto to Emancipation. Historical and Contemporary Reconsiderations of the Jewish Community* (Scranton 1997) pp. VII-XVIII; D. ENGEL "Crisis and Lachrymosity: On Salo Baron, Neobaronianism, and the Study of Modern European Jewish History," *Jewish History* 20:3-4 (2006) pp. 243-264.

²⁸ See the references to the research by myself and others listed above.

But the Pope did not see his role as that of a defender of Jews. Just as he respected the imperial rules and regulations protecting them, by the same token he applied the same juridical norms to keep Jews from expanding. His manifest concern about the ownership of Christian slaves²⁹ is understood to have been motivated by the Jewish tendency to convert their *mancipia*.³⁰ And he reacted harshly to the discovery that a Jew had constructed an altar in honor of Elijah frequented by Jews and Christians, demanding corporal punishment for the guilty party.³¹ He also promoted the conversion of Jews – especially those at the bottom of the social pyramid – by recommending either doctrinal or economic incentives.³²

In line with Roman law, Gregory sought to avoid conflict. This he confirmed explicitly when he repudiated the usurpation of the synagogue in Cagliari, arguing that, in the face of danger from the Lombards,

²⁹ This is the primary concern of Gregory the Great regarding Judaism (*ep.* III, 37; IV, 9; VI, 29; VII, 21; IX, 105; IX, 214; IX, 216). Indeed, the topic is the subject of almost one third of all the missives referring to the Jewish problem. Epistle IX, 229, addressed to Reccared, celebrates the monarch's resistance to a Jewish attempt to abolish a law. Specialists consider that the law was *LV. XII, 2, 12*, that forbade the possession of Christian slaves by Jews.

³⁰ The same preoccupation is found in the *Codex Theodosianus*, as well as in different ancient and medieval canon laws. A. LINDER, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit 1987); PAKTER, *Medieval Canon Law*, pp. 84-142; G. DE BONFILS, *Gli schiavi dagli ebrei nella legislazione del IV secolo. Storia di un divieto* (Bari 1992). One epistle in the *Registrum* shows, albeit in the case of a Samaritan, the forced circumcision of a Christian slave (*ep.* VI, 30). On Gregory and slavery, see A. SERFASS, "Slavery and Pope Gregory the Great," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14 (2006) pp. 77-103. Although solid evidence is lacking, available data suggest that Jews tended to convert their slaves because a Jewish *servus* could perform tasks in a Jewish home that a non-Jew was forbidden to carry out. On this subject, still valuable, see E. E. URBACH, *The Laws regarding Slavery* (New York 1979).

³¹ Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, III, 37.

³² The need to convert was barely touched upon with landowners and merchants, and when it was mentioned, the recommended course was convincing those implicated by gradual preaching. By contrast, he suggested to his Sicilian representatives that they should promise the Jewish *coloni* that worked in ecclesiastical lands a reduction in the canon if they converted. (*ep.* II, 50; V, 7). LAHAM COHEN, "Los judíos en el *Registrum epistularum*."

harmony should prevail among city dwellers.³³ In an unstable Italian peninsula subject to turbulence of various kinds, the Pope did not see the Jewish problem as urgent. As long as the Jews remained under control and renounced attempts to expand, Gregorian logic mandated that their continuity be guaranteed. This is why he used so few anti-Jewish *topoi* in his letters. Unlike what will be seen in the treatises, the Pope avoided applying to Jews characterizations linked to concepts such as *caecitas* or *perfidia*. When confronting bishops openly hostile to Jews, he held to a moderate discourse, in accordance with the behavior required by imperial juridical precedent. Not even in the most heated epistles did the tension spill over to Jews in general: when he condemned Nasas, the individual who constructed an altar to Elijah, the criticism was directed at him individually and not the Jewish people.³⁴ Also absent from the epistolary is the association of Jews with the devil, as well as references to their responsibility for the death of Christ, which are present in other Gregorian works.

It should be kept in mind that the Gregorian preoccupation with the Jewish question was slight. Only 26 of the 866 extant epistles deal with the subject, on occasion in little more than a paragraph. Moreover, the vast majority of the missives are in response to a complaint. The Pope is presenting not initiatives but solutions to specific problems. According to the *Thesaurus Sancti Gregorii Magni*, Gregory uses the words *Iudaeus*, *Iuda*, *Iudaicum*, *Israel*, *Hebraeus* and *Synagoga* only 77 times in the *Re-*

³³ Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, IX, 196, 30-37: "Sanctitas ergo uestra gratiam inter ciuitatis suae habitatores, adhibitis sibi filiis suis quibus una uobiscum haec displicent, sacerdotali adoratione, sicut eam decet, studeat facere, quia hoc maxime tempore, quando de hoste formido est, diuisum habere populum non debetis. Quia uero non minorem de uobis, quam de nobis sollicitudinem gerimus, hoc quoque pariter indicandum curauimus, quod finita hac pace Agilulfus Langobardorum rex pacem non faciat." 'Therefore may your holiness strive to achieve good relations among the inhabitants of the city, appealing to the children who are displeased, as are you, by such things, through appropriate priestly exhortation. This must be done since – especially in these times, when there is fear because of the enemy – you must not possess a divided people. Our concern is such that it is no less about you than about us, and we will similarly try to indicate to you that once the truce ends, Agilulf, the king of the Lombards, will not make peace.' My translation.

³⁴ Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, III, 37.

gistrum.³⁵ The density of the use of these words is less than in almost any other work in the Gregorian *corpus*. Furthermore, they are inserted in the epistles where Gregory is referring to *real Jews*. As will be seen below, this reality is rooted in the fact that, unlike Ambrose, Jerome or Augustine, his epistles are practical in nature: they were oriented toward solving concrete problems and do not contain in-depth exegetical analysis.

In sum, I contend that Gregory's attitude toward Jews, in line with the Roman juridical tradition, was aimed at maintaining the *status quo*; conversion was only conceived in non-coercive terms. With these objectives in mind, Gregory shunned disparagement, except for certain concrete instances,³⁶ thus keeping his distance from anti-Jewish *topoi*. If the *Registrum* were the only document extant, one could unhesitatingly state that Gregory the Great eluded the *adversus Iudaeos* literary tradition. However, the situation discerned in his other works is quite different.

JEWES IN THE GREGORIAN DISCOURSE

As anticipated above, in addition to the epistolary, the Gregorian *corpus* includes diverse texts. The most important undoubtedly is the *Moralia in Iob*, due to both its length – it comprises approximately half of all his production – and the time he dedicated to it.³⁷ This commentary on the *Book*

³⁵ *Thesaurus Sancti Gregorii Magni* (Turnhout 1986).

³⁶ On only a few occasions does Gregory disparage the Jews in his *Registrum*. The most direct reference is found in the letter to Reccared, where he speaks of the *perfidia Iudaica* (ep. IX, 229). As noted above, it is on the subject of slaves that the bishop of Rome is most aggressive. Thus, in ep. VI, 29, he speaks of *superstitio Iudaica*, and in identical letters addressed to the Merovingian kings (eps. IX, 214 and IX, 216) he draws an indirect parallel between Jews and *hostes* and *inimici*. By the same token, also when referring to Christian slaves in the hands of Jews, he replaces *Iudaei* with *infideles* in ep. IV, 9. And finally, he refers indirectly to Judaism as *superstitio* and *error* in ep. I, 45. In any case, it should be emphasized that, in the set of references to Jews in the *Registrum*, these negative qualifiers are a minority and, as has been shown, in most cases are presented indirectly. As can be seen, the majority of anti-Jewish *topoi* are absent.

³⁷ M. ADRIAEN (ed.), *Gregorius Magnus. Moralia in Iob* (CCSL 143, 143A y 143B [Turnhout 1979-1985]).

of *Job*, together with the *Homiliae in Hiezechihalem*³⁸ and the *Expositio in Canticum Canticorum*,³⁹ contains a significant quantity of biblical exegesis in comparison with Gregory the Great's standards in this regard.⁴⁰ Most scholars agree that these three works were oriented toward a specialized audience accustomed to Scriptural analysis.⁴¹ By contrast, the *Homiliae in Evangelia*,⁴² although structured around biblical exegesis as well, were read to the Roman public at large; the use of plain language makes this clear, as does the profusion of *exempla*, a practice recommended by the Pope himself for instructing the uncultured.⁴³ The utilization of *exempla* is precisely the feature that cha-

³⁸ M. ADRIAEN (ed.), *Gregorius Magnus. Homiliae in Hiezechihalem prophetam* (CCSL 142 [Turnhout 1971]).

³⁹ P. VERBRACKEN (ed.), *Gregorius Magnus. In Canticum canticorum. In Librum primum Regum* (CCSL 144 [Turnhout 1963]). The authorship of the *Expositio* – which, additionally, is only a fragment – has been debated, although to date it is considered Gregorian. A good assessment of the current state of the issue is found in M. DELCOGLIANO, *Gregory the Great. On the Song of the Songs* (Kentucky 2012) pp. 29-56.

⁴⁰ Gregory the Great was not a refined theologian, which during the 19th century made him the object of criticism of a great many specialists. Mommsen called him a “small great man” and Harnack linked him to the *Vulgärkatholizismus*. T. MOMMSEN, “Die Bewirtschaftung der Kirchengüter unter Papst Gregor I,” *Zeitschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 1 (1893) pp. 43-60; A. VON HARNACK, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, III (Freiburg–Leipzig–Tübingen 1897) pp. 248-249. Currently other aspects of his works are valued. At the same time it is recognized that, either for lack of ability or for having other objectives, he did not delve deeply into complex theological questions. An actualized survey: B. NEIL and M. J. DAL SANTO (eds.), *A Companion to Gregory the Great* (Leiden–Boston 2013).

⁴¹ For the particular public each text was destined for, see: A. BARTOLOMEI ROMAGNOLI, “Gregorio Magno davanti a Giobbe. Fondamenti di un’antropologia medievale,” in *I volti di Giobbe. Percorsi interdisciplinari*, eds. G. MARCONI and C. TERMINI (Bologna 2003) pp. 127-145:129; F. MARTELLO, “Il pubblico del predicatore nelle *Homiliae in Hiezechihalem* di Gregorio Magno,” in *L’eredità spirituale di Gregorio Magno tra Occidente e Oriente. Atti del Simposio Internazionale “Gregorio Magno 604-2004”*, Roma 10-12 marzo 2004, ed. G. I. GARGANO (Roma 2005) pp. 201-228. It is still worthwhile M. BANNIARD, *Viva voce. Communication écrite et communication orale du IVe au IXe siècle en Occident Latin* (Paris 1992) pp. 105-180.

⁴² R. ÉTAIX (ed.), *Gregorius Magnus. Homiliae in Evangelia* (CCSL 141 [Turnhout 1999]).

⁴³ Gregory the Great, *Regula pastoralis*, III, 6, 18-22. The best edition is: B. JUDIC, F. ROMMEL and Ch. MOREL (eds.), *Grégoire le Grand. Règle Pastorale* (Paris 1992).

racterizes the Gregorian work whose authorship has been most debated for several centuries: the *Dialogi*.⁴⁴ Composed of more than 200 narratives describing miracles – with little or no biblical exegesis –, the purpose of this text was to provide priests with examples to use in sermons. As Robert Markus has acutely observed, pastoral praxis was the activity that allowed Gregory to resolve the tension between an active and a contemplative life.⁴⁵ Directed toward this same end, the *Regula pastoralis* was composed primarily of strategies for preaching to different types of people. The consensus among critics is that, with the exception of the *Registrum*, Gregorian texts are oriented toward molding correct behavior in Christians.⁴⁶ *In Librum primum Regum* is not considered within the purview of this analysis, since almost without exception critics no longer consider it Gregorian.⁴⁷

The treatment Jews receive in Gregory's work – excepting the *Dialogi* – is uniform.⁴⁸ Unlike what was observed in the *Registrum*,

⁴⁴ While Gregorian authorship has been debated since the early days of the modern era, Francis Clark's books were responsible for reviving the issue. F. CLARK, *The Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues* (Leiden 1987) and *The Gregorian Dialogues and the Origins of Benedictine Monasticism* (Leiden–Boston 2003). Nevertheless, to date most specialists still consider the text to have come from the pen of Gregory the Great. The best edition is: S. PRICOCO and M. SIMONETTI (eds.), *Gregorio Magno. Storie di Santi e Diavoli* (2 vols., Roma 2005–2006). Although earlier, it is also valuable A. DE VOGÜÉ and P. ANTIN (eds.), *Grégoire le Grand. Dialogues* (SC 251, 260 y 265 [Paris 1978–1980]).

⁴⁵ R. MARKUS, "Gregory the Great's Rector and his Genesis," in *Grégoire le Grand. Actes du colloque international du CNRS, Chantilly, 15-19 septembre, 1982*, eds. J. FONTAINE, R. GILLET and S. PELLISTRANDI (Paris 1986) pp. 137–146.

⁴⁶ For two examples of this viewpoint, see the brilliant studies of Claude DAGENS (*Saint Grégoire le Grand. Culture et expérience chrétiennes* [Paris 1977] pp. 21–28) and Peter BROWN (*The Rise of Western Christendom. Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000* [Malden 2013] pp. 202–215).

⁴⁷ P. VERBRACKEN (ed.), *Gregorius Magnus. In Canticum canticorum. In Librum primum Regum*. At present, following the outstanding investigation by De Vogüé, notwithstanding certain dissonant voices, it is considered to be a work of a monk of Cava. A. DE VOGÜÉ, "L'Auteur du Commentaire des Rois attribué à saint Grégoire: un moine de Cava?," *Revue Bénédictine* 106 (1996) pp. 319–331. A good summary of the question is found in L. CASTALDI, "In librum primum Regum," in *Enciclopedia gregoriana: la vita, l'opera e la fortuna di Gregorio Magno*, eds. G. CREMASCOLI and A. DEGL'INNOCENTI (Firenze 2008) pp. 180–182.

⁴⁸ In addition to the *Registrum*, Robert Markus and Jeremy Cohen studied the rest of the Gregorian works. Jean Stern has concentrated primarily on these texts. None,

Gregory the Great resorts again and again to the age-old topics accumulated in the *adversus Iudaeos* literature. As Jean Stern has correctly emphasized, Jews are less vilified in Gregory's texts than in the writings of other authors.⁴⁹ All the same, this statement should be qualified. Gregory dedicated fewer pages to Jews than others, but the majority of those he did are hostile. They don't carry the level of virulence of a Chrysostom, but they are aggressive. He does not accuse Jews of deicide,⁵⁰ but he does stress their participation in the events that led up to the death of Christ,⁵¹ and when celebrating Easter before the whole Roman population, he underscored that Jews had taken pleasure in believing Jesus dead.⁵²

Along this same line, Markus has perceptively noted that Judaism appeared more discordant to Gregory in the late 6th century – in a world the Pope saw as more Christianized – than it would have seemed to Augustine in the early 5th century.⁵³ The latter had assigned the role of *testes*

however, has underlined the particular treatment the Jews receive in the *Dialogi*. Although his work is marked by a confessional bias, Benedetto Calati should also be mentioned in this regard. B. CALATI, "Die Juden im Denken Gregors des Grossen. Bemerkungen zu *Moralia in Job* 35,26," *Judaica* 47:1 (1991) pp. 31-37; MARKUS, "The Jew as a Hermeneutical Device," pp. 1-15; COHEN, *Living Letters*, pp. 73-94; J. STERN, "Israel et l'église dans l'exegese de Saint Grégoire le Grand," in *L'esegesi dei padri latini. Dalle Origini a Gregorio Magno* (Roma 2000) pp. 675-689; R. LAHAM COHEN, "En torno a motivaciones y efectos del discurso antijudío: el caso de los *Moralia in Iob* de Gregorio Magno," *Polis* 23 (2011) pp. 115-151. For the Jews in the *Dialogi* see R. LAHAM COHEN, "Vas uacuum et signatum. La Imagen del judío en los *Dialogi* y el problema de la autoría gregoriana," *Revue des Études Juives* (in press).

⁴⁹ STERN, "Israel et l'église," p. 685.

⁵⁰ L. CRACCO RUGGINI, "Pagani, ebrei e cristiani: odio sociologico e odio teologico nel mondo antico," in *Gli ebrei nell'alto medioevo. Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo*, XXVI (Spoleto 1980) pp. 15-101: 23.

⁵¹ There are some examples in Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, XXVII, XXVII, 51, 17-22; Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Hiezechiellem*, I, VII, 10, 234-237.

⁵² Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia*, XXI, 7, 122-136.

⁵³ MARKUS, "The Jew as a Hermeneutical Device," p. 7. In the same line, COHEN, *Living Letters*.

veritatis to the Jews,⁵⁴ but not even this subordinate category existed for Gregory to employ in his theology.

The main anti-Jewish *topoi* employed by the Pope simply replicate the *adversus Iudaeos* tradition.⁵⁵ They can be categorized as follows: 1) irrational attachment to Mosaic law;⁵⁶ 2) incredulity, lack of faith, blindness, lustfulness, evil, and other negative qualifiers;⁵⁷ 3) complicity in deicide and the persecution of the first Christians;⁵⁸ 4) association with the Devil

⁵⁴ There are any number of studies on this question. Still relevant is B. BLUMENKRANZ, *Die Judenpredigt Augustins. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der jüdisch-christlichen Beziehungen in den ersten Jahrhunderten* (Basel 1946). More current (and more controversial) is the research by Paula Fredriksen, especially the book that is a condensation of her work: *Augustine and the Jews. A Christian defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York 2008). For the concept of *testis veritatis* see A. MASSIE, *Peuple Prophétique et nation témoin. Le peuple juif dans le Contra Faustum manichaeum de saint Augustin* (Paris 2011).

⁵⁵ Citing all passages scrutinized is not feasible. In what follows I will restrict myself to giving a single example of each *topos*. For an overall view of the research, see my Ph.D. Thesis *Judíos hermenéuticos y judíos históricos*.

⁵⁶ Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, III, XXVIII, 55, 53-55: “Vnde et Vrias ad Ioab cum epistolis, ex quibus occidi debeat mittitur, quia idem ipse iudaicus populus legem portat qua conuincente moriatur.” ‘From where Uriah is also sent to Joab with epistles, following which he must be assassinated, just like the Jewish people themselves who bring the law that, once convicted, kills them.’ My translation.

⁵⁷ Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Hiezechielem*, I, II, 10, 211-214: “Quae incarnato Domino tanto grauius ab Aquilone uentum turbinis pertulit, quanto a sua rectitudine concussa cadens, per torporem mentis in perfidia frigida remansit.” ‘Which as severely as a whirlwind from the North, dragged the Lord incarnate, when upon falling, [Judea] struck in its uprightness by the paralysis of its mind, was left in the cold lack of faith.’ My translation.

⁵⁸ Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia*, XXI, 7, 122-136: “Sed cum Iudaei hunc ad insultationes suas de cruce descendere minime cernerent, cum morientem uiderent, eum se uicisse crediderunt, nomen illius se quasi exstinxisse gauisi sunt. Sed ecce de morte nomen eius per mundum creuit, ex qua hoc infidelis turba exstinxisse se credidit; et quae gaudebat occisum, dolet mortuum, quia hunc ad suam gloriam cognoscit peruenisse per poenam.” ‘But as the Jews distinguished that He [Christ] did not descend from the cross at their insult; as they saw him dead, they believed that they had vanquished him and were glad as if they had extinguished His name. But behold the name of the one who the unfaithful mob believed they had extinguished, grew around the world since his death. And they who took pleasure in the murder, lament the death because they know that, through punishment, He had gained glory.’ My translation.

and the Antichrist;⁵⁹ 5) replacement by Christianized gentiles and loss of the privileged bond with God.⁶⁰

These *topoi* frequently appear in texts with exegetical analysis (*Moralia*, *Expositio in Canticum Canticorum*, *Homiliae in Hiezechihelam*, and *Homiliae in Evangelia*). In the *Regula pastoralis*, biblical Jews are mentioned – always in generic terms – only four times. Yet even in such a small sample, one of the references is anti-Jewish.⁶¹

The only exception to this schema occurs – excluding the *Registrum*, which I will take up shortly – in the *Dialogi*. In this work, which has the fewest mentions of Jewish topics in the entire Gregorian *corpus*, there is only one *exemplum* in which a Jew appears. In this case, however, the Pope does not utter negative considerations. On the contrary, the Jew, who is the protagonist of the story, comes to the aid of a bishop who was about to sin. Not only is he not associated with the devil; rather, he fears demons and they harass him.⁶² The Jew in the *Dialogi* – it should be remembered that this is the only *real Jew* who was Gregory's contemporary to figure in his works, outside of the epistolary – is viewed through a neutral lens, far removed from the *adversus Iudaeos* literature. The de-

⁵⁹ Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, VI, IV, 5, 15-18: "Antiquus hostis iudaicum populum armatus rapuit quia in eo uitam fidei fraudulentae suggestionis iaculis extinxit, ut unde se inhaerere Deo crederet, inde eius ordinationi repugnaret." 'The ancient enemy [a reference to the devil], armed, dragged the Jewish people with him, because he extinguished [in the Jewish people] the life of faith by means of the darts of fraudulent suggestion, from where they [the Jewish people] believed they were adhering [to God], when in reality they were opposing His orders.' My translation.

⁶⁰ Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Hiezechihelam*, I, VI, 10-11, 210-123: "Videbat enim sanctus propheta quia haec ipsa uerba quae obscuritatibus obuoluta proferebat, non Iudaico populo, sed gentibus panderentur." 'The holy prophet saw, in reality, that these same words that he pronounced, covered with obscurity, would not be made manifest by the Jewish people but instead by the gentiles.' My translation.

⁶¹ Gregory the Great, *Regula pastoralis*, III, 26, 59-63.

⁶² Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, III, 7. Jacques Le Goff well understood that, in this *exemplum*, the figure of the Jew is observed through a relatively benign prism. J. LE GOFF, "Le juif dans les *exempla* médiévaux: le cas de l'*Alphabetum narrationum*," in *Le racisme. Mythes et sciences. Mélanges Léon Poliakov*, ed. M. OLENDER (Bruxelles 1980) pp. 209-220.

mons he confronts call him *uas vacuum*;⁶³ he is empty, but not an enemy. Indeed, before the story ends, he has been converted.⁶⁴

That said, why do the Jews in the *Registrum* and the *Dialogi* seem to be observed from a moderate perspective, while in the rest of the Gregorian works anti-Jewish topics abound? In other words, why does the same individual who applies an even-handed praxis toward historical Jews openly attack them in his theological treatises? In my view, this dissonance is a key for understanding the *adversus Iudaeos* literature. I will now attempt to demonstrate it using both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF MENTIONS MADE OF JEWS AND JUDAISM IN THE GREGORIAN *CORPUS*

The first tool I will employ is the *Thesaurus Sancti Gregorii Magni* mentioned above. In principle, it will disclose how many *formae* referring to biblical Israel and the Jews in general were used by Gregory the Great in each individual text.

However, a few preliminary considerations regarding how the *enumeratio formarum* is employed in the *Thesaurus* are in order. First, only the number of times a form appears, and not in what context, is men-

⁶³ Gregory the Great *Dialogi*, III, 7. The Jew, sleeping in the ruins of a temple of Apollo, where nightfall surprised him during a journey, had crossed himself before entering the place. The devils meeting there were recounting their misdeeds – that included tempting a bishop that the Jew would take it upon himself to save – when they detected the presence of the stranger. Frightened at the sign of the cross when they find him, they say: “Vae, uae, uas uacuum et signatum” (‘Oh! Oh! An empty glass and yet marked!’). The *exemplum* is very long, so I will quote just the last words (III, 7, 74-80): “Iudaeum uero, cuius uisione atque increpatione saluatus est, ad aeternam salutem traxit. Nam sacramentis fidei imbutum atque aqua baptismatis emundatum ad sanctae Ecclesiae gremium perduxit. Sicque factum est ut Hebraeus isdem, dum saluti alienae consulit, perueniret ad suam, et omnipotens Deus inde alterum ad bonam uitam perduceret, unde in bona uita alterum custodisset.” ‘Andrew led the Jew – who had saved him with his vision and rephension – to eternal salvation. He [the Jew] – imbued with the sacraments of the faith and purified with the baptismal water – was led [by the bishop] to the bosom of the Church. The same Hebrew that gave him salvation, obtained his own, and the omnipotent God led one that had taken care of the life of another, to righteous life.’ My Translation.

⁶⁴ See LAHAM COHEN, “*Vas uacuum et signatum*.”

tioned. For example, there is no way to distinguish between Jews contemporary to the author and biblical Jews. Furthermore, only the specific forms surveyed are detected, which means, for example, that “ancient people” as label for Israel is not recorded.

Results can be observed in the following table:⁶⁵

Work	Forma							Percentage relative to the total in each work
	<i>Iudaeus</i>	<i>Iuda</i>	<i>Iudaicus</i>	<i>Israel</i>	<i>Synagoga</i>	<i>Hebraeus</i>	Total	
<i>In Cant.</i>	2	7	0	1	4	0	14	0.187%
<i>In Hiez.</i>	24	47	19	52	14	24	180	0.169%
<i>Moralia</i>	86	151	49	133	43	35	497	0.103%
<i>In Ev.</i>	21	22	10	13	11	2	79	0.097%
<i>Regula</i>	4	5	0	12	0	1	22	0.054%
<i>Registrum</i>	39	3	7	9	9	10	77	0.036%
<i>Dialogi</i>	6	3	0	1	0	1	11	0.020%

Table 1. Disaggregated analysis of *formae* linked to Judaism according to each Gregorian work.

It should be noted that the works with extensive exegetic passages (*Expositio in Canticum Canticorum*, *Homiliae in Hiezechihalem*, *Moralia in Iob* and *Homiliae in Evangelia*) show the biggest proportion of *formae* linked to Israel and Judaism. Although in fourth place, the *Homiliae in Evangelia* have approximately the same percentage of mentions as the *Moralia* and so can figure – by relative percentage – in the same group. As was hypothesized above, a marked difference does exist between this group of texts on the one hand, and the *Regula pastoralis*, the *Registrum epistularum* and the *Dialogi* on the other.

A study combining quantitative and qualitative aspects carried out in the course of my research,⁶⁶ corroborates this preliminary result. A close reading of the entire Gregorian work to detect any and all mentions of

⁶⁵ The total number of each forma, although placed under the singular nominative heading, includes all declensions. As anticipated above, the commentary to I Regum has not been included. The percentage is derived from the relation between the total number of *formae* linked to Judaism in each work and the total number of all *formae* in each Gregorian text.

⁶⁶ LAHAM COHEN, *Judíos hermenéuticos y judíos históricos*.

Jews and Judaism yielded a total of 302 significant mentions;⁶⁷ I then quantified the results, which gave the following distribution:⁶⁸

Work	Total number of significant mentions to Judaism	Distribution of significant mentions of Judaism among different parts of the <i>corpus</i>	Relative size of each Gregorian work	Ratio between relative size of the text and relative proportion of mentions to Judaism
<i>In Cant.</i>	5	1.66%	0.75%	2.19
<i>In Hiez.</i>	61	20.20%	10.78%	1.87
<i>Moralia</i>	168	55.63%	48.96%	1.14
<i>In Ev.</i>	28	9.27%	8.28%	1.12
<i>Registrum</i>	34	11.26%	21.47%	0.52
<i>Regula</i>	4	1.32%	4.11%	0.32
<i>Dialogi</i>	2	0.66%	5.62%	0.12
TOTAL	302	100%	100%	1

Table 2. Significant mentions of Judaism in the Gregorian *corpus*.

The relative impact of the Jewish question in each written text, as can be observed in the table, has been calculated as the relation between how the mentions of Jews are distributed throughout the Gregorian *corpus* and the relative size of each individual text. This made it possible to obtain a *ratio* that enabled me to calibrate the importance, in disaggregated terms, of the significant mentions.

The results of this qualitative analysis concur with the data from the *Thesaurus*, except for the relative positions of the *Registrum* and the

⁶⁷ I take a significant mention to mean generic or concrete references to Jews and Judaism, both biblical and contemporary to the Pope, that were not merely biblical quotes. In other words, if Gregory employed a biblical passage on the Jewish people and then made a comment referring to Judaism, this was considered a significant mention. But a biblical quote referring to the Jewish people without further comment was not counted. The letters on Jewish subjects in the *Registrum* have been counted as a single unit, given the fact that they clearly constitute unitary semantic blocks.

⁶⁸ Neither the commentary on *I Regum* has been analyzed here. This coefficient arises from the relation between the total number of *formae* in the Gregorian corpus (excluding *I Regum*) and the number of *formae* in each Gregorian work.

Regula,⁶⁹ works that are included within the same numerical set as the *Dialogi*, forming a group clearly differentiated from the exegetical texts. The latter reach a ratio superior to 1, while the former fall below it.

As I see it, my first task is to explain the existence of these two blocks. Why does the Judaic theme have so little resonance in the *Registrum*, the *Regula pastoralis*, and the *Dialogi*? The answer is that the Pope showed little interest in the Jewish question. The works in this group are dedicated to practical matters involving appropriate political solutions to problems, as well as paraenetic aids for pastoral work. Gregory the Great was a pragmatic man. In his epistles he does not dwell on questions of dogma; in the *Regula* he confines himself to addressing who can preach and what they should say; in the *Dialogi*, he restricts himself to giving *exempla*, with little recourse to exegetical support.

In the *Registrum* not only do Judaic forms fall below the average; only 26 of the more than 866 letters – approximately 3% – refer to Jews. Unlike authors such as Jerome or Ambrose, as a rule the Pope does not spend much time on complex theological issues; rather, he tends to dedicate his efforts to specific matters, employing a limited number of figures and models taken from the Scriptures.⁷⁰ Accordingly, of the 34 significant

⁶⁹ This disparity can be explained by the large number of *formae* regarding Judaism found in the *Regula* and included in the *Thesaurus* that are simply biblical quotes to qualify Israel without exegesis.

⁷⁰ See the difference in the following table:

Author	Number of <i>formae</i> associated with <i>Iudaicus</i> , <i>Iuda</i> , <i>Iudaicum</i> , <i>Israel</i> , <i>Synagoga</i> y <i>Hebraeus</i>	Proportion in relation to total number of <i>formae</i>	Proportion in relation to total number of <i>formae</i> only in the letters
Jerome	9280	0.548%	0.379%
Ambrose	1662	0.185%	0.257%
Augustine	6758	0.135%	0.095%
Gregory	880	0.090%	0.036%

Table 3. *Formae* linked to Judaism in Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory the Great

While all the authors analyzed above, relatively speaking always, utilized more *formae* linked to Judaism than Gregory the Great, the difference becomes decidedly more marked when the analysis is limited to epistles written by these Church Fathers. This different is explained by the fact that Gregory had strictly practical objectives in mind when he wrote his letters, while Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine used the

mentions of Jews, 26 occur in letters revolving around problems with historical Jews, with only eight exceptions in which reference is made to biblical Jews.⁷¹

In the *Regula* Gregory makes no mention at all of the need to convert the Jews. Written in plain language with little biblical exegesis, the text aims at providing tools to clerics preaching to Christians. No attention is paid to proselytizing nor are any strategies elaborated to attract pagans or Jews to Christianity. It bears repeating that, in this text, the Bishop of Rome seeks to improve the behavior of Christians by indicating appropriate conduct and repudiating what is inappropriate. Because Jews are not among his paraenetic concerns, they are the object of only four significant mentions, all referring to biblical Jews that serve as generic examples without specification regarding time and place.

And finally, unrelated to biblical exegesis and with little or no theological intricacies, the *Dialogi* offer a vast number of *exempla* taken from everyday life and easily understood by the general public. Few models and figures from the Scriptures are found. The simple, straightforward text does not intellectually challenge the reader or the public for whom the stories have been written down. In the *Dialogi* there are only two significant references to Judaism. The first, referred to earlier, evokes a *real Jew* – over and above his mythical character – from Gregory's time; the second is a reference to biblical Israel, far removed from the *real Jews*

epistolary genre as a means for setting forth their theological positions. When Gregory mentioned Jews in his epistles, he was referring by and large to his contemporaries. By contrast, the other authors made greater use of biblical figures. Ambrose represents a paradigmatic case. As is well-known, he gave little importance to directives in his letters. Indeed, Michaela Zelzer, Otto Faller's successor as editor of the Ambrose epistolary, holds that many letters were actually short treatises, bearing little resemblance to the epistolary genre. This is reflected in the above table, where more *formae* related to Judaism are found in his epistles than in the rest of his treatises. O. FALLER and M. ZELZER (eds.), *Sancti Ambrosii opera* (CSEL 82 [4 vols., Viena–Leipzig 1968–1990]) pp. XX–XV. The table is based in the analysis of *Thesaurus Sancti Gregorii Magni*; *Thesaurus Augustinianus* (Turnhout 1989); *Thesaurus Sancti Hieronymi* (Turnhout 1990), and *Thesaurus Sancti Ambrosii* (Turnhout 1994).

⁷¹ Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, I, 6, 9–11; I, 24, 214–219; V, 37, 67–71; V, 44, 166–168; VII, 5, 63–64; X, 21, 32–36; XI, 56, 28–34; XI, 52, 31–34.

living in Rome when it was enunciated.⁷² This minimal presence of Judaism, figuring precisely in a work like the *Dialogi* destined to the general Christian population, once again shows that for Gregory neither Jews nor their potential for Judaization was a problem worthy of his attention.

The minor role exegesis and allegory play is what links together texts as diverse as the *Registrum*, the *Regula pastoralis*, and the *Dialogi*. If there had been no Jews in the areas under Gregory's control or subject to his intervention, only eight mentions would have appeared in the *Registrum*. Thus, an obvious but nonetheless necessary preliminary conclusion in support of the schema I propose is that, in his practical works, Gregory showed little concern for the Jewish question. Furthermore, as noted above, the 26 letters comprising the epistolary are, for the most part, a response to exceptional situations requiring papal solutions. In addition, discursive virulence is absent from these three works, indicating the lack of immediacy regarding *adversus Iudaeos* topics. In fact, the *Iudaeus* in the *Dialogi* is viewed in a positive light.

The panorama is different in the rest of the Gregorian texts. Although always to a lesser degree than other church fathers, Gregory the Great shows more interest in Jews in his exegetical works. Yet what kind of Jews does Gregory talk about in this type of text? We are clearly in the presence of hermeneutic Jews in the terminology of Jeremy Cohen,⁷³ or theological Jews according to that of Gilbert Dahan for a later period.⁷⁴ In

⁷² Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, III, 14, 124-127.

⁷³ COHEN, *Living Letters*, pp. 2-3: "In order to meet their particular needs, Christian theology and exegesis created a Jew of their own, and this book investigates the medieval history of such a hermeneutically and doctrinally crafted Jew, from Augustine of Hippo to Thomas Aquinas. In prior publications I have studied the contribution of Dominican and Franciscan friars to Christian perceptions of Jews and Judaism in the High Middle Ages; here I examine key chapters in the earlier history of the "hermeneutical Jew" that is, the Jew as constructed in the discourse of Christian theology, and above all in Christian theologians' interpretation of Scripture."

⁷⁴ G. DAHAN, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au moyen âge* (Paris 1999) pp. 585: "Au juif quotidien et réel, avec qui l'on discute volontiers de Bible ou de sciences, se superpose ce que nous avons appelé le "juif théologique," un juif irréel, en qui viennent se mêler, s'additionner divers stéréotypes – nés d'abord de la réflexion des théologiens." As I have said, Fredriksen ("Roman Christianity and the Post-Roman West," p. 249) continues to use similar categories. In her words, *hermeneutical Jew* is

a valuable article published in 1995, Markus stated that, for Gregory, the Jew was a hermeneutic device.⁷⁵ With few exceptions, those that do exist are tangential; no references to Jews contemporary to the Pope are found. The Jews inhabiting these texts, taken from the Scriptures and frozen in time, are entirely dissociated from reality. They are negative models, examples of doubt, incredulity, stubbornness, pride and evil. There are no historical Jews, potential or otherwise, to be found. No knowledge can be gleaned about Jews living in the late 6th century from these references.

In the *Homiliae in Evangelia* Gregory could have discussed with his public the Jews living in their city – Chrysostom had done so, and Agobard of Lyon would do so a few centuries later – but he decided not to. I reiterate: he didn't think it either important or urgent. Although evidence is lacking, possibly in Rome, as was the case in the Antioch of Chrysostom, there were some Christians who followed Jewish customs. Indeed, Gregory himself expresses indignation at certain individuals in the *eternal city* celebrating *shabat*.⁷⁶ Yet not even in that epistle did he consider Jews influential.

Close scrutiny of the tables above shows that the greatest density of mentions of Judaism is found in the *Expositio in Canticum Canticorum*, and the least within the exegetical group in the *Homiliae in Evangelia*. The reason why is evident, serving to corroborate the premise being developed here. This takes the form of a simple equation: the greater the hermeneutic depth of the text, the greater the number of hermeneutic Jews. The *Expositio* is the most intricate exegetic text that Gregory the Great wrote and the *Homiliae in Evangelia* the work where exegesis is the most subdued. The former was written for an educated audience, the latter for the public at large.

However, given the fragmentary nature and debated authorship of the *Expositio*, it can be left aside. The works that follow, in order of appearance, on the table, are the *Homiliae in Hiezechihelam* and the *Moralia*. Contrary to the hypothesis I am developing, a valid question would be

“the ‘Jew’ as a figure for wrongly reading the Bible” and *rhetorical Jew* is “the ‘Jew’ as a polemical anti-Self.” She speaks also about *real Jews*.

⁷⁵ MARKUS, “The Jew as a Hermeneutical Device.”

⁷⁶ Gregory the Great, *Registrum*, XIII, 1.

whether the *Moralia* are more complex than the *Homiliae in Hiezechiheltem*.⁷⁷ Yet Gregory himself stressed the opaqueness of the prophet's text, and the difficulty he had in undertaking its analysis.⁷⁸ As I see it, while both texts make extensive use of figures and allegories, the *Moralia* contain a more concrete message than the *Homiliae in Hiezechiheltem*. Moreover, it should be underscored that, by its very nature, the exegesis of a text like that of Ezekiel demands more mentions of biblical Israel and the subsequent need to explain the figure. Both in the table based on the *Thesaurus* and the qualitative table that follows, these two variables place the *Moralia* closer to the *Homiliae in Evangelia* than to the homilies on the *Book of Ezekiel*.

Above and beyond density of mentions, it should be kept in mind that, in the *Moralia*, the *Expositio*, and both homiletic works, time and again the Pope makes use of anti-Jewish topics from the *adversus Iudaeos* literature. What is barely perceptible in the *Registrum*, the *Regula*, and the *Dialogi*, erupts. Jews who were viewed through a moderate prism in the epistolary are stamped, in Gregory's exegetic works, with the same kind of anti-Judaism characterizing the works of church fathers like Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine.

GREGORY THE GREAT AS EXAMPLE OF THEOLOGICAL ANTI-JUDAISM

I initiated this study with an outline of the different arguments advanced in the debate surrounding the *adversus Iudaeos* literature. We know that the Italy of Gregory the Great was characterized by both co-existence and conflict: synagogues were usurped by order of bishops, who suppressed Judaic celebrations. The Pope consistently attempted to act as mediator. His objective was to avoid, not exacerbate, confrontation. When communicating with an intransigent bishop, he avoided hostile epithets toward the Jews, as his objective was to bring about concord in a sphere where it did not abound. According to the evidence, the Pope

⁷⁷ As was indicated by BANNIARD, *Viva voce*, p. 172.

⁷⁸ Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Hiezechichelem*, II, *Praefatio*, pp. 8-9.

considered the relations with the Jews as a secondary issue during tumultuous times.

Thus, his vocation to avoid exacerbating yet another conflict on an already troubled Italy led Gregory to refrain from employing anti-Jewish topics in his epistles. This does not mean that he ruled out a more aggressive approach in cases involving what he perceived as Judaic expansion. But not even then did he have frequent recourse to *topoi adversus Iudaeos*. He made a designated individual the guilty party, not the Jewish people as a whole.

There is not harsh anti-Judaism in the Gregory who wrote the *Registrum* and the *Dialogi*. There is conflict but no harsh anti-Judaism. This is because the Pope did not actively seek to fan the flames; rather, his desire was to reduce tension and curb passions. Neither is there philo-Judaism. Nevertheless, in the context of other church fathers of the period, Gregory's position was, at the least, that of a moderate.

This is not the case, however, in the rest of the Gregorian works, where manifest anti-Judaism is present. As indicated above, in the *Expositio*, the *Moralia*, the *Homiliae in Evangelia*, and the *Homiliae in Hiezechihelem*, the Pope did not hesitate to express aggression toward the Jewish religion. This should be understood not as the product of a bipolar personality but instead as the palpable demonstration of a church father whose *adversus Iudaeos* terminology responds to the requirements of Christian discourse, not the imperatives of social reality.

Gregory was a conservative. He admired Augustine, and although always reluctant to name his sources, also drew sustenance from Ambrose, Jerome, and Cassian. The anti-Jewish discourse was not only in the air at the time; it had been profusely utilized by his peers. With this in mind, not to employ anti-Jewish references would have made him an anomaly.

Yet Gregorian anti-Judaism should not be reduced to a mere convention. The *topoi of adversus Iudaeos* literature were still in force, in the sense that they explained why the Jews had announced the coming of the Messiah and then abandoned him; why the Old Testament told the story of the Jewish people, and why Christ had been the Messiah. Within the framework of Christian exegesis, the Jews remained an essential element in the ontology of the divine plan. They also provided Gregory with nega-

tive models that served his objective of constructing a kind of encyclopedia on how Christians should and should not behave.

Ruether understood that her postulates were validated by Gregory.⁷⁹ This insight, to which she unfortunately dedicated only a few lines,⁸⁰ I consider correct. In my study I have demonstrated that a quantitative analysis of the Gregorian *corpus* supplies additional support for her postulates: the almost total lack of anti-Jewish mentions in the practical works increases dramatically in the exegetical texts (*Expositio, Homiliae in Hiezechihelam, Moralia* and *Homiliae in Evangelia*). In these works a clear progression in the frequency of *topoi adversus Iudaeos* is evident, with the highest density registered in works destined for people familiarized with the Scripture, where figures, metaphors, and allegories abound.

In light of the foregoing, I understand that Gregory the Great's anti-Judaism is rooted in the intrinsic dynamics of the Christian discourse itself, and not an outgrowth of the desire to modify bonds among communities of believers. The anti-Jewish *topoi* in Gregory are as much tools as a discursive necessity. They arise within the text, and there they remain.

These conclusions regarding Gregory should not be taken to apply to other church fathers. It is important to stress that men like Chrysostom in the prior period, and Agobard in the following one, launched their attacks on Judaism on the basis of a real battle between two monotheisms.

By contrast, within the Gregorian worldview, conflict and competition between Jews and Christians did not predominate. In his works Jews appear either when the Pope was obliged to resolve a conflict not generated by him, or when he was called upon to analyze and explain the Bible and the divine plan to listeners. In both situations Gregory

⁷⁹ RUETHER, *Faith and Fratricide*, pp. 199-200: "Gregory the Great, reigning as Roman pontiff at the end of the sixth century, represent a perfect model of the anti-Judaic theory, as this has been embodied in Christian Roman law and carried on by the Church through Roman law."

⁸⁰ As was mentioned in the text, Jeremy Cohen delved more deeply into the Gregorian duality, although, in my view, without devoting sufficient attention to a comparative analysis of Gregory's theological works.

responded in the traditional manner as was his wont. When faced with concrete problems, he applied the age-old juridical directives designed to guarantee the protection and control of the Jews. And with regard to the hermeneutic Jews inhabiting the Scriptures and the works of the church fathers, he remained loyal to the equally venerable *adversus Iudaeos* tradition. Gregory was not a contradictory being; rather, his conservatism was twofold.

Recibido: 08/12/2014

Aceptado: 25/07/2015